Town of
Northumberland
Office of Selectmen
19 Main St
Groveton NH 03582
Phone (603) 636-1450
Fax (603) 636-6098

www.northumberlandnh.org

Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft
Date: Monday, December 16, 2024
Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square
Time: 6:00 P.M.

Board members present: Jim Tierney, Jim Weagle, Keith Bronson
Others: Tammy Letson, Sean Durkin, Jim Gibson, Pete Marshall, Norm Cotter, Al Rossetto, Eric Brown, Kathy Frechette, C. R Wheeler, Deb Miles, George Kenison, Cathy Conway, Andre Brasseur, Dawn Bryan, Jeff Normand, William Daisey, Peter Pelletier, Reggie Charron, Kathy Wiles, Rebecca St. Cyr - Minute Taker

1. **Chairman Opens the meeting:** J. Tierney opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** All

3. **Acceptance of Minutes: 12/02/2024**
   Motion to accept the 12/02/2024 minutes by: J. Weagle
   2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

4. **Department Head Business**:
   Fire Department – Andre Brasseur, Chief
   Since the last meeting:

   4 calls for Service – YTD 79 for this calendar year, which is a little more than last year.

   We had the Hayride on Saturday 12/14/24, it went very well. Andre wasn't sure how many attended, he thinks it was a little less than last year. He thanked the community, we had the boots out in the stores, people were donating, people brought in baked goods. We received a lot of support from our community. The Fire Department appreciates it; they are glad to put the event on and look forward to doing it in the future.

   EMS – Jim Gibson, EMS Chief's Report

   1. 2024 as of this printing, we have had 513 calls to date.
   2. 2023 on this date, we were at 454 calls.
   3. Comstar report: updated comes out Wednesday.
   4. A1's heating problem has been temporarily fixed and will be addressed in next year's budget.
   5. A1 is up for State EMS inspection in February.

*****This institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer. ****

PD – Peter Pelletier, Chief

Calls for Service – 217 / NHSP helped us with 26
MV Stops – 36
Citations 4
1. Failure Yield to Traffic
2. License Required <12 months
3. Operating Without Lights
4. Driving After Revocation or Suspension

Arrests – 6
DWI – 2
Drugs – 0

Crashes – 11 – It's common this time of year to see a rise in crashes with the snow.

New Investigations – 13

Follow – up from last meeting:
We have spoken to several bicyclists regarding proper lighting at night. We are on the road To fixing this issue.

We have been giving warnings & tickets for winter parking violations. We've put it out on social media to make sure people are not parking on the streets between midnight and 7:00 am.

J. Tierney asked about the citations, what's the difference between citations 2 and 4. Peter explained driving w/o a license – he never got a license or was driving with an expired license.

C. Wheeler said whoever represented Peter at the last meeting, showed over the 2 previous cycles there were in excess of 80 stops and only 8 tickets were issued. What's the biggest reason for stops? Peter said the most common is speeding and then maybe stop sign violations. Chris asked about the money generated by tickets; the Town doesn't collect any of that money? Peter explained the money from speeding tickets goes to the State by law. The Town is also allowed to make ordinances like for stop signs, burning rubber, etc. There are certain offenses the State reserves for itself, but allows the Town to do others. We have some pretty good ordinances which allow us to write tickets that would otherwise go to the State.

5. Requested Agenda Matters:

a. Hill Project: Notice of Award **–** T. Letson – we asked Cathy Conway join us from the engineering company. This is the next step we need to take; everything has been done to have USDA and DES both approve the ability to sign off on the awards of the project. The project excludes Grand View, due to the budget. There are 2 roads that are on the maybe list – Pike St. and Prospect St. With the award we have vs. the budget, we have only a 3% contingency, which is very low. If they hit more ledge or something else comes up and we have change orders 3% may not be enough. USDA and DES are both fine with the maybe's. The company with the lowest bid was DeFelice Corporation.

The second bid (award) is with Vortex, which is to do the lining of a section of the sewer pipes. It's the preference to replace the majority, but there is a section close to the railroad tracks which the RR refused to allow us to dig that close. They don't want recent repairs on the tracks damaged. We asked about pipe bursting – they still said no. They did sign off on the lining. S. Durkin asked what the price difference is between the low bid and the next one. Cathy Conway said it was $3-4 million, there was a significant difference. Sean asked if they compared apples to apples. Cathy said yes and we were lucky to get the $8.7. She explained the bid comparison process that was done; they did

a thorough background check; we compared the pricing to the engineering estimate and checked several references. Tammy discussed the bid that was awarded; Cathy said the contractors all completed out the same forms for the bidding.

Sean asked if we as a Town own the property were the pipelines are? Tammy said in some cases yes because it's our road and some we don't. He asked why there isn't an easement in place for the railroad? Tammy is not sure which came first in this case. Sean said if the line is there, there should have been an easement in place. Tammy reminded of the age of when this system went in and how things were then vs. now.

Tammy noted there were 2 bids received on time and a third one came in late. The bid amount was between the other 2, but was disqualified due to being late.

Al Rossetto comment when going with the lowest bid is there any performance requirements. Cathy said yes 100% performance. Tammy said there will also be 2 employees on-site that are not DeFelice employees who will be watching everything as it gets done.

N. Cotter asked why the Town can't go back to eminent domain. J. Tierney said not with the railroad; they also have eminent domain powers granted by the Federal Government in the 1800's. Andre asked if there is an option to move it out of their right of way. Cathy said we looked at a variety of alternatives; we were really limited in terms to where it could be moved w/o cost implications. This was the best solution to improve the existing sewer line. J. Tierney said it's at the foot of Maple St. and then drops again down to along the tracks. It would be grossly expensive to blast it down another 6'-10'. Discussion ensured regarding the size of the line.

C. Wheeler commented that this area was discussed at previous meetings; it was brought up that the line has a life expectancy of 20 years. What happens then? Tammy said today, it can be lined again, 20 years ago we couldn't line pipes and now we can. As we move forward, the engineers will come up with a way to handle it. Wheeler asked when it's expected to start. Cathy said she doesn't expect any actual work to start until the Spring.

E. Brown noted that we are spending $18,000,000+/- on the hill; (Tammy said no $10.2 million) are we taking a bond out for that? Tammy said yes; the bond is 30 years from when approved. It was approved in 2023. Discussion continued re: the bond. Eric asked if camera's had been run in the lines; Tammy said yes it was a requirement to be sure it could handle the lining. G. Kenison asked did we look into horizontal boring underneath the railroad. Cathy said we are not going under it; we are going parallel to it and further discussed.

Tammy noted there will be a lot of paperwork to be signed; the first round is approx. a 2 hour process.

Motion for the Select Board Chairman to sign the paperwork by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

6. Town Administrator Business:

a. Weston Dam – They are in the process for redoing their license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; part of the process is to let them know if we have any concerns. They have no plans of change to their operations; they want to continue status quo.

The Board had no concerns.

b. Transfer Station Container – Paul Perras has some money left in the budget; he recommends that we get a new container for MSW. He got the specs and has got 2 quotes. Tammy asked Keith (as a welder) to look at it as well. Paul wants to go with the 40 yard container. J. Weagle asked if Normandeau would go pick it up and maybe charge us less. Tammy didn't know where it was coming from. K. Bronson said there is one he deals with presently and another from Presby in Berlin. Keith said they do need a container; the bottom is falling out of the current one and the rails underneath that ride on the truck are rusted out. When they are that far gone, you're better off to buy a new one. It's still a container and with a little bit of wood, a floor could be built and use it for storage. The cost of a new container is approx. $13,000 total. Tammy said there is a lot of weight that goes into it and waste with drippage so we don't want something that's flimsy. The current container has been in service for approx. 27 years. J. Tierney said the quote from Atlantic Container is $9,975.00; freight charges on both quotes is $1,300. It would be approx. $11,275.00., K. Bronson said Presby has them also. Discussion continued regarding the quotes. E. Brown asked if the quotes are from a manufacturer. The quote is from Atlantic Recycling, Rollinsford. Brown said you might get a better bid directly with a manufacturer. J .Tierney said they have sales territories, if it's intruding on someone's sales territory; we might get a good deal but there could be a lawsuit. Brown further discussed a company he used to work for that made containers.

   S. Durkin commented that north of the notches we try to keep business in the County; can you go to Presby with the low bid to see if they can match it. J. Tierney said for ethics reasons, he wouldn't and further discussed. The amount is to include the shipping cost.

   Motion to allow Paul Perras to spend up to $12,000 for a new container by: J. Weagle 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

c. Sidewalk Project - There is paperwork to be signed. Tammy said the good news is our rep at DOT and our engineer went before the committee that grants the money with a good sales pitch. We want to grind the roads on Main, Church and State Street's and put new asphalt down. The TAP (Transportation Aid Project) grant, which is paying for the project doesn't cover grinding or paving. There is a fund that does pay for it and the State of NH has agreed (to what we voted on in March) to up the money to take care of the increase in cost over 5 years and add to do the roads. What we presented at the Public Hearing with the engineers is all set; the State is willing to do the 80% and the 20% was approved through Town meeting.

   The other fund is 80 / 20 also. J. Tierney said we raised enough for the $2.4 million for the sidewalks, we have enough. Tammy said we can thank the DOT Rep and Engineer that got us this. The downside is with this change, it will be 2027 before the project will be done. It's coming with a cost of time!! It was 2019 when the Town first approved it. Sean asked if the cost will be held until 2027? Tammy said it hasn't gone out for bid yet. Sean asked when will the bidding process start? The engineers will start that. Tammy doesn't know what the timeline is. She further discussed the bidding process. Chris asked if they will be changing the width of the road. Tammy said, yes, they will change where the edges of the sidewalk sit, some of the parking spaces will be removed so it's not so close in some areas. Discussion continued regarding the widths of the streets, parking, etc. Tammy commented it's why DOT has taken out a couple of spaces over time. The second pot of money is where the money will come from for that part of the project. The State made some changes when they paved and there will be more changes with the project. ADA compliance has been considered.

*****This institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer. ****

Motion for the chairman to sign the paperwork for the Sidewalk Project by: J. Weagle 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

d. Christmas Tree hours – Tammy gave a huge thank you to Asplundh, Jerry Monahan & crew as well as Jodi Paradis. They started to put the lights up on a very cold day. The lights were on a spool and it got tangled; they brought them into the office, we had some volunteers during the day and some stayed after hours to get them untangled. Kudos to everyone and their efforts, the tree is lit!! Now people want extended hours; the hours were set to come on at 4:00 pm and shut off at 10:30 pm.

The first person asked why we are shutting them off at all, some have said midnight; and others say leave them on until 7:00 am. Someone may have messed with the timer; the lights were on in the morning when Romy came into work. Tammy asked the Board what they would like to set for the time. J. Tierney asked how many complaints have we had. It was noted that people of the second shift get out at 11:00 pm.

Motion to set the Christmas tree lights hours at 4:00 pm – 12:00 am by: J. Weagle 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

The timer will be locked; the train and the bridge lights will be set for the same time and that timer will be locked as well. Andre said the Fire Station shuts theirs off at 6:30 am and pays maybe $5.00 extra over the season.

e. Trust Fund Withdrawal Requests -

Tammy said there are 3 requests:

1) $75,000 for the Warrant Article approved for the Ambulance purchase. It just needs to be signed. It will come out of the Ambulance CRF.

Motion to withdraw $75,000 from the Ambulance CRF by: J. Weagle 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

2) $107,048 from the Road CRF, for Bearce, Mechanic, Old Village Rd. It's what we paid out to Central Paving.

Motion to take $107,048 out of the Road CRF by: K. Bronson 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

3) Assessing – because of the way the assessors did the pickups this year; this is pulling CMP's cost out of the CRF. J. Tierney said the only money put on the assessing line was for Skip. The amount from assessing is $11,361.25; if there is that much money left at the end it goes into the General Fund. If there is a Warrant Article it can be approved and put back into the Assessing CRF.

Motion to sign if its needed in the budget, if not it will be kept in the fund by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

f. January and February Meeting Schedule – the 2nd meeting in January and February both dates fall on a Monday holiday. The Board agreed to move both of the meetings to Tuesday.

g. Carwash building – Tammy discussed the ARPA fund; she forgot the Fire Doors were taken out of that fund; the balance is approx. $45,000. We have a cost for the metal

building and a cost for the concrete, we need a cost for the doors. They won't do the engineering for the doors until we agree to go with them. The other companies have said the same thing. The quotes for the doors are: $3,000 each – 2 doors $6,000.

The electricity will be done by a local person; his estimate is $2,500 - $3000. They have reduced the size of the building to 30' x 30'; the lowest quote for the concrete is $14,500 – total all in cost is $47,712.71. The extra cost can come from the budget or from a CRF will be $2,710.15 based on these estimates.

Sean asked if that includes the doors and does that mean it's turnkey, ready to move into. Tammy said the rest of the costs would come out of the Highway budget; they will be doing the groundwork. Tammy discussed the location; it's the empty parking lot across the street, which is on the back side of the Christmas tree. Sean asked why you wouldn't want to keep it where it is. Tammy addressed, Reggie said plowing is an issue and it will open it up to additional parking and no one parks over there. Tammy said to keep in mind that we don't own the backside of the Town Hall, if B. Chapman ever decides to sell that land we would lose a fair portion of parking. J. Tierney asked if we would be able to use the slab that's under the current building – Al said no, it's all cracked.

Tammy said the $47,000 is the more expensive of the 2 buildings. The cheaper one is $23,900. We are suggesting the one for $24,212.00, it comes with a much longer warranty; she reviewed the warranty.

Sean asked about the total cost; the Town crew will be doing the prep work, tear the old one down after hazardous testing and then dispose of it. Yes, there are additional costs that goes with this; some material costs and there is the employee labor.

The company that we want to go with will sell us the doors at wholesale but won't give us an estimate until the engineering is done. This is to commit the ARPA money before Dec 31. If we don't go with this then we need to come up with something before Dec 31 or the money will be lost. Tammy said we need to have a solid commitment or it will be handed back to the Federal government.

Motion to go ahead and build the new building with the ARPA money and take the rest out of the Building CRF by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson

All in Favor 3-0

h. Tammy wanted to say thank you to a resident in Town that brought in some goodies for the Town employee's.

i. N. Cotter asked if the building will be insulated? Reggie said no it's just for cold storage.

7. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

a. Abatements (2)**:**

1. Map/Lot 104-220 **–** she is asking for an abatement because the cost per sq ft is higher than others in the neighborhood. She wants to know what the assessors have to say.

Motion to send it to the assessors by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

2. Map/Lot 247-002-09 – Same concept as above.
   Motion to send to the assessors by: J. Weagle
   2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

b. Building Permits –

1. Map/Lot 236-008 – Charles Boisclair – 637 Lancaster Rd; install solar panels, a wind turbine, misc. equipment installed on the east and back of motel roof, fencing with solar caps in front of the motel. Fee has been paid. Al has signed it. G. Kenison asked if they need to have a plan? K. Bronson said we need more information.

   Motion to approve by: J. Weagle

J. Weagle retracted his motion. Al will see Charles and report back to the Board.

8. **Public Comment:

- P. Marshall commented that Randy does a great job plowing, the road is clear before the State highway is. Al commented that Page Hill has been better in the Northumberland area than in Lancaster. The road crew does a good job with the small crew. The difference is they care.

- Chris Wheeler asked Tammy to explain how the water bill got paid. She advised the company that has been calling us to discuss the $17,000 water bill has asked if they could get an abatement of the sewer portion of the bill (by Friday at noon). We verified with the two people that were there when it was leaking that the water didn't go through the sewer. The company agreed if the Board was willing to abate the sewer portion, then they would pay the water portion. She also asked us to waive the interest that has accrued because she was willing to do it and pay right away. If the Board were willing to do this on Friday, she would guarantee that we would have the money for a tax lien that was outstanding as well as the water bill. They have paid the bills. The Board had a special meeting on Friday and approved. The payment was received via an electronic ACH payment.

- Eric Brown presented 2 complaints to the Board:
  1) Officer Daisey and his license plate; Eric believes Officer Daisey is in violation of the code of ethics for his vanity plate "RunThis," he read the section for - Procedures for law enforcement, paragraph 2. His personal belief is that Daisey is in contempt to the Town and the Select Board. Eric knows the Select Board told Daisey to register his vehicle. There has been a lot of division over Officer Daisey's car not being registered properly. Eric feels for him to have this kind of plate is a stick it in your face kind of attitude towards the Town and towards a lot of Towns people. He believes it's an ethics violation.

  2) Is to encourage Chief Pelletier to go through his policies again. He knows Officer Imperial did a lot of good work on it updating the policies but there is still some outdated info in the policies. There is a thing that officers can't live more than 20 minutes away; Chief Pelletier lives over 20 minutes away in Berlin. He would like to see them go through as a double check to be sure there aren't things that are not being followed correctly. It could be a simple fix such as adding mileage or there could be other things that he didn't notice. Chief Pelletier and Officer Imperial did a lot of hard work; he would like them to review again to be sure it's up to date and that we are adhering to it.

- Norm – MOM'S – he thinks it's a shame they have left the Town because they couldn't get a trail to the store. K. Bronson said it's a lot more than that. J. Tierny said there are other reasons why it closed that have nothing to do with the snowmobile/ATV trail. K. Frechette commented the building is still assessed for the same open or closed. J. Tierney commented there is a bill right now in Concord to mandate that "all" roads in the State be open to snowmobiles and ATV's. He's not sure if it includes the interstate highways and he's not sure that we want that here.

- G. Kenison – follow up with the rats? We haven't heard anything further from the Health Officer.

- Deb Miles commented on Eric Brown's concern. She said it's a free country and if Officer Daisey wants to put that on his number plate, that's his business. We don't know why he has that on his plate. It might mean Run This type of vehicle; someone is speculating and making a mountain out of a molehill with ethics violations. Eric said last week he was told by K. Bronson that I should just get over it; well maybe Officer Daisey should just get over it. If the Town really wants to move on, he believes it's an ethics violation. The Police Department has an ethics policy that they need to maintain a high standard. We pay a lot of money to the police officers in this Town; with his base pay, benefits, retirement - it's $130,000+ per year.

  It's only singling Bill out on this one, but he's seen other problems in our police department. He feels that Officer Daisey should move on as well. He thinks it's a statement to his attitude towards the Town. Deb Miles said and we keep going back!! Eric said there are other issues we can talk about that are real issues. Daisey sets the example for the younger officers and he should not be portraying that attitude. Deb said and you are chasing him around all the time. Discussion continued about Eric taking a picture.

- G. Kenison asked how are we doing on the new website and software system. J. Weagle said they are still building the new website. Tammy said we don't have a new system yet; it's not on the sunset list yet, but it will be. Eventually we will need to make some changes.

  Merry Christmas!

9. **Announcements:** The Town Offices will be closed at noon on December 24, 2024 and all day on December 25, 2024 in observance of Christmas. The Town Offices will be closed on January 1, 2025 in observance of New Year's Day.

   The Transfer Station will be open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm

10. **Next Board Meeting Date**: Monday, January 6, 2025 – 6 pm

11. **Non-Public Session: (Pursuant to RSA'S 91-A:3, II (c)(d):**
    Motion to into Non-Public Session by: J. Weagle
    2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0
    Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; J. Weagle – Yes; K. Bronson - Yes

Into Non-Public Session at 7:41 pm

a. Employee Matter

*****This institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer. ****

b. Employee Matter
c. Resident Matter
Motion to come out of Non-Public Session by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0
Out of Non Public Session at 8:12 pm

Into Regular Session at 8:12 pm

No further business was discussed.

12. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca St Cyr – Minute Taker

*Agenda is subject to change
**Deadline for Agenda items is 12:00 noon on the Friday before scheduled business meeting (by vote of Board of Selectmen at 7/11/2005 meeting). This deadline may be amended by the Board of Selectmen at will (by vote of Board of Selectmen at 06/17/2024 meeting).

Minutes approved by Northumberland Select Board Members on_____

X_____
Jim Tierney
Northumberland Select Board Chair

X_____
Jim Weagle
Northumberland Select Board Member

X_____
Keith Bronson
Northumberland Select Board Member

*****This Institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer*****